

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 CANBER 06500 300340Z

11

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02

TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01

SCEM-02 INT-08 DRC-01 /198 W
----- 121109

R 300146Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2085

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 6500

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, EMIN, AS

SUBJ: AUSTRALIAN PETROLEUM POLICY - CONNOR MEETING
WITH DR. LEWIS WEEKS

REF: CANBERRA 5894

1. BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF WEEKS NATURAL RESOURCES, LTD.,
A CONNECTICUT-BASED MULTI-NATIONAL PETROLEUM VENTURE,
MET THIS WEEK IN AUSTRALIA. DELEGATION FROM THE BOARD
VISITED CANBERRA NOVEMBER 27 AND HAD MEETINGS WITH
MINISTER FOR MINERALS AND ENERGY CONNOR, AND PRIME MINISTER
AND WERE AMBASSADOR'S GUESTS FOR LUNCH. AMBASSADOR HAS NOW RECEIVED,
IN CONFIDENCE, A SUMMARY OF THE MEETING WITH MINISTER
CONNOR WHICH IS OF INTEREST BECAUSE IT SUGGESTS THAT CONNOR'S
THINKING ON THE ROLE OF FOREIGN CAPITAL IN AUSTRALIAN PETROLEUM
INDUSTRY MAY BE SHIFITING IN WAKE OF CURRENT WORLD
PETROLEUM SITUATION.

2. CONNOR, WITH NUMEROUS ADVISORS INCLUDING A. B. MACFARLANE,
WHO IS EXPECTED TO HEAD THE PROSPECTIVE NATIONAL PETROLEUM
AND MINERALS EXPLORATION AUTHORITY, MET WITH DR. LEWIS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CANBER 06500 300340Z

WEEKS, CHAIRMAN OF WEEKS NATURAL RESOURCES. DR. WEEKS,

AN AMERICAN GEOLOGIST, WHO WAS LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISCOVERY OF AUSTRALIA'S IMPORTANT BASS STRAITS (BHP-ESSO) PETROLEUM FIELD, WAS ACCOMPANIED BY BOARD MEMBERS SIR HOWARD BEALE AND LORD GREENWOOD, AND THE FIRM'S PRESIDENT, DR. PAUL TEMPLE.

3. ACCORDING TO ACCOUNT GIVEN TO AMBASSADOR, MINISTER CONNOR GATHERED THE GROUP AROUND LARGE-SCALE MAPS OF AUSTRALIA AND SURROUNDING WATERS AND QUIZZED DR. WEEKS VIGOROUSLY CONCERNING THE PROSPECTS FOR FINDING PETROLEUM IN ALL AREAS OF AUSTRALIA AND ITS OFFSHORE WATERS. DURING THE DISCUSSION DR. WEEKS SUGGESTED GENERALLY THAT PROSPECTS WERE BETTER OFFSHORE THAN ON LAND, AND THAT BEST PROSPECTS WOULD BE IN DEEP OFFSHORE AREAS REQUIRING ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AND SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES. IN ENSUING DISCUSSION CONNOR, WHILE REITERATING HIS INSISTENCE ON AUSTRALIAN CONTROL OF EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT, TACITLY ACCEPTED THE NEED FOR SUBSTANTIAL FOREIGN CAPITAL AS WELL AS TECHNOLOGY. IN THIS DISCUSSION CONNOR INQUIRED ABOUT THE WILLINGNESS OF WEEKS NATURAL RESOURCES TO ASSIST THE DEPARTMENT OF MINERALS AND ENERGY IN SOME UNSPECIFIED BROAD CAPACITY IN CONNECTION WITH AUSTRALIA'S EXPLORATION PLANS. WEEKS, WHILE DOUBTFUL ABOUT ADVISORY ROLE, INDICATED HE RETAINED SPECIAL INTEREST IN AUSTRALIA AND WILLING TO CONSIDER ARRANGEMENTS FOR HIS FIRM TO PARTICIPATE IN FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA PETROLEUM.

4. FOLLOWING CONNOR APPOINTMENT, WEEKS DELEGATION PAID BRIEF CALL ON PRIME MINISTER DURING WHICH HE BRIEFED PRIME MINISTER ON CURRENT WORLD PETROLEUM PROBLEMS.

5. EMBASSY COMMENT: WHILE CAUTION SHOULD BE EXERCISED IN DETAILED INTERPRETATION OF THIS INDIRECT ACCOUNT OF THE CONNOR-WEEKS MEETING, EMBASSY BELIEVES IT DOES POINT TO POSSIBILITY OF SIGNIFICANT EVOLUTION IN CONNOR'S THINKING. FOLLOWING HIS RETURN FROM TOKYO (REFTEL), PRIME MINISTER IMPLIED POSSIBILITY OF SOME FOREIGN PARTICIPATION IN PETROLEUM EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT. HOWEVER, CONNOR'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 CANBER 06500 300340Z

WHICH HAVE OFTEN DIVERGED FROM ATTITUDES EXPRESSED PRIVATELY, CONTINUED TO LEAN MORE TOWARD TOTAL AUSTRALIAN OWNERSHIP OF ENERGY DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING PETROLEUM. IN THIS LIGHT, HIS DISCUSSION WITH DR. WEEKS SEEMS TO REPRESENT SHIFT TOWARD VIEW THAT MINORITY FOREIGN EQUITY IN PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT MAY BE EITHER PRICE FOR INDISPENSABLE FOREIGN ROLE IN EXPLORATION OR POSSIBLY NECESSARY IN ANDHMMTSELF TO FINANCE SUBSEQUENT

DEVELOPMENT. MOREOVER, EMPHASIS CONNOR APPARENTLY PLACED
ON VIGOROUS EXPLORATION EFFORTS MAY REFLECT
RECOGNITION THAT VIRTUAL HALT IN EXPLORATION UNDER NEW
GOA MINERAL POLICIES MUST BE REPLACED BY RE-DOUBLED EFFORT
TO EXPAND DOMESTIC SOURCES IN CONTEXT CURRENT WORLD
PETROLEUM SITUATION.
GREEN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NATURAL RESOURCES, PETROLEUM, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, MEETING DELEGATIONS, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 NOV 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: smithrj
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973CANBER06500
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: CANBERRA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t1973113/aaaaabzx.tel
Line Count: 122
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: CANBERRA 5894
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: smithrj
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 OCT 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17-Oct-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <13-Dec-2001 by smithrj>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AUSTRALIAN PETROLEUM POLICY - CONNOR MEETING WITH DR. LEWIS WEEKS
TAGS: ENRG, EMIN, AS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005